



We are pleased to present you a copy of the Nebraska Assistive Technology Partnership (ATP) 2013 Annual Report.

ATP is Nebraska's state AT Act Program, established in 1989. ATP continues to support access and acquisition of needed assistive technology (AT) devices, modifications, and other AT services for Nebraskans with disabilities or health concerns.

We are excited to share our collaboration and the comprehensive programs and services provided throughout the year in the areas of community living, education, and employment.

We are grateful for the many partnerships that make success possible and look forward to the future outcomes that these partnerships provide.

Sincerely,

Leslie G. Novacek
Director
Assistive Technology Partnership

Assistive Technology Partnership



Success with Technology

2013 Annual Report

Mission Statement

The Assistive Technology Partnership (ATP), through collaboration, provides all Nebraskans access and opportunities to better live, learn, and work.

Celebrating 25 Years November 1, 2014

The Assistive Technology Partnership, known as ATP, was established in 1989 and was funded by the Technology-Related Assistance Act of 1988. The act was amended in 2004. State and territory programs focus on improving the provision of AT through comprehensive, statewide programs that are consumer responsive.

The Assistive Technology Partnership has focused on state leadership activities that provide AT as outlined in the Tech Act for 24 years. In addition, ATP has collaborated and formed partnerships with state government, education, non-profits, and consumer groups.

ATP serves people with all types of disabilities, ages, in varied environments, and provides a full spectrum of services for consumers and their families, educators, employers, service providers, health care professionals, and AT vendors.

Equipment demonstration, loans, and reutilization are the keys to success with technology and are the one of the initiatives of our state plan. This initiative is an integral part of ATP's partnerships with education, employment, and community living

ATP has helped consumers be successful with assistive technology for 24 years and we look forward to celebrating our 25th anniversary.

What is assistive technology (AT)?

AT is any item, piece of equipment, or system, whether acquired commercially, modified, or customized, that is commonly used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities.

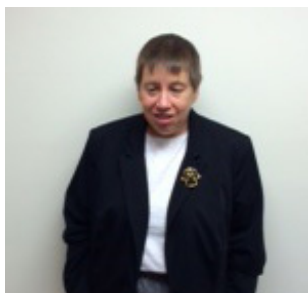


A letter from the ATP Advisory Council Chair

I am writing as the chair of the Nebraska Assistive Technology Partnership Advisory Council. The council and the ATP staff have had another very successful year and have served a broad range of people in Nebraska with disabilities. From demonstrating and loaning equipment for people to try before they buy to offering information about technology available to people with a variety of disabilities, these services make life better for all Nebraskans.

The ATP advisory council helps to develop the state plan. Members are consumers, caregivers, and professionals who take an interest in assuring that the partnership provides efficient service to the people of Nebraska.

One of my favorite parts of the project is the www.at4all.com website where people can search for a given device or just search by disability to find out what is available to help meet a person's needs. I also appreciate having access to the demonstration center. Sometimes having someone available to show you what something does and how it works makes a big difference in a person's confidence to make choices and live with a disability.



Another valuable service ATP offers is coordinating funding. The funding coordinator can help identify funding for projects like home modifications.

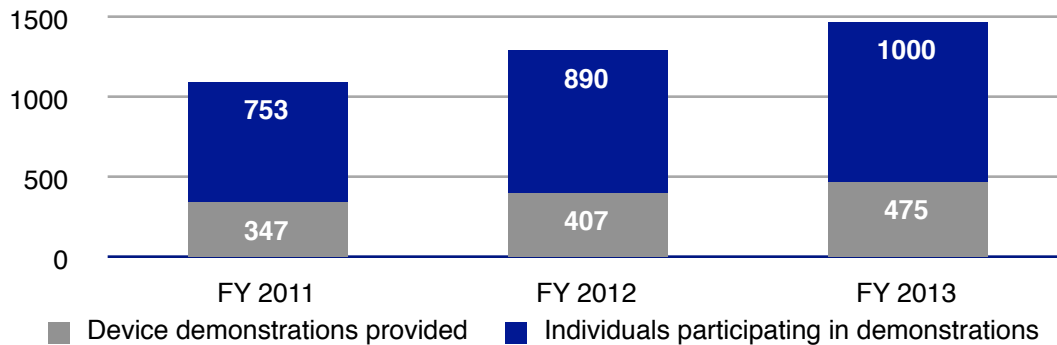
Thank you for your interest in the Nebraska Assistive Technology Partnership. As the Advisory Council Chair, I am proud of the difference it makes in the lives of people in our state.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nancy Coffman".

Nancy Coffman, CVRCB/NCLB
Program Specialist/Technology Services
Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired

Device Demonstration Activities

Device Demonstrations compare the features and benefits of a particular assistive technology device or category of devices for individuals or small group. Demonstrations support an informed decision before committing to a purchase that may be costly and not the right fit.



Individuals participating in demonstrations	
Individuals with disabilities	406
Family members	105
Representatives of:	
• Education	386
• Employment	69
• Allied health and rehabilitation	14
• Community living	12
• Technology	8
Total	1,000

Type of AT demonstrations	
Computers	260
Daily living	27
Environmental adaptations	17
Mobility, seating, and positioning	32
Learning/cognition	101
Speech communication	14
Vision/hearing	24
Total	475

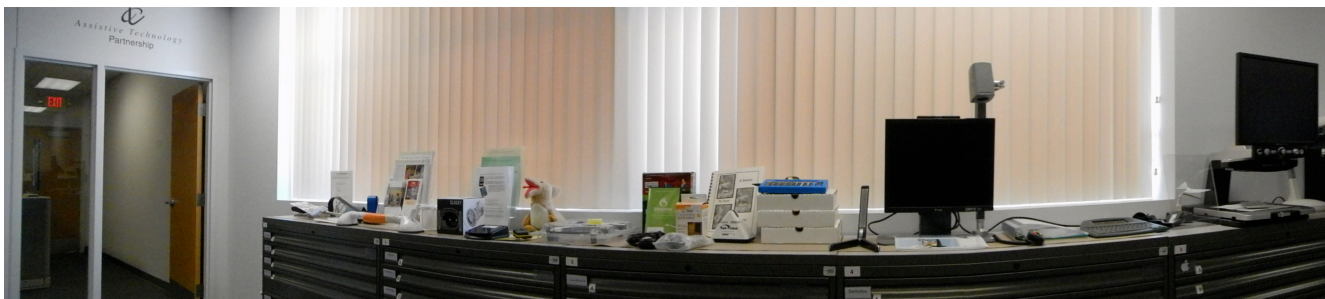
Consumer satisfaction:

98.6% highly satisfied and satisfied

Equipment demonstrations are conducted in a demonstration center (shown in photo below) and equipment can be delivered by Technology Specialists to explore the possibilities at home, school, or work.

No matter the location, the impact is the same. Exploring what is available and trying before you buy prevents purchasing a solution that is not the best fit and most cost effective.

ATP is there for the next steps which can include making recommendations to the the agency that referred the individual to ATP, locating a vendor, and exploring training or customization when needed.



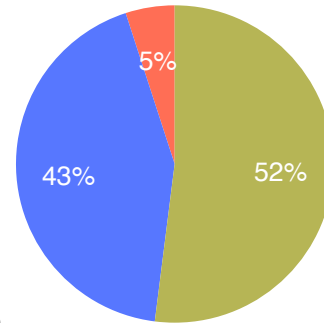
Device Loan Activities

Short term loans enable individuals or entities to borrow and “try-out” devices. A short term device loan is not a permanent reassignment, instead it enables individuals to have direct access to devices, often in the environment where they will be used.

	Individuals Participating	Devices Loaned
FY 2011	1,352	2,123
FY 2012	1,417	2,236
FY 2013	1,381	2,316
Total	4,150	6,675

Purpose of Loans (2,316)

- Assists in decision making
- Short term accommodation
- Serves as a loaner during device repair or while waiting for funding

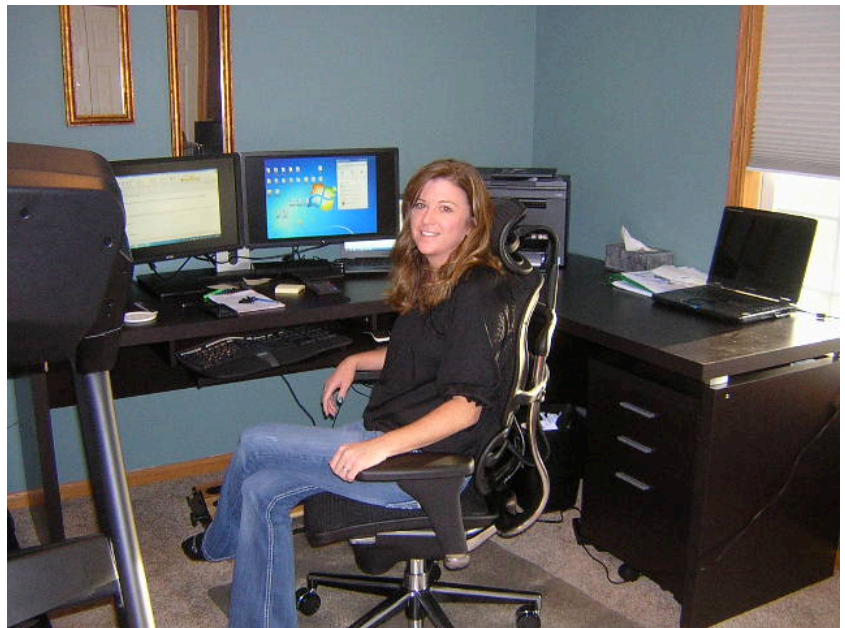


Trying Before Buying Makes a Difference

Michelle drafts and negotiates complex service contracts for a computer company from her home in Lincoln. Neck and shoulder pain caused by a whiplash became a barrier to her working full time.

Michelle was referred to ATP by Nebraska VR to explore how a chair and other adjustments could keep her on the job.

Thanks to the availability of demonstration equipment, Michelle experimented with several office chairs. The first chair did not support her back in the right location. After using a second chair for several weeks, it became uncomfortable. The third chair with a high back was the right fit and Michelle continues working full time.



On the job at home

Michelle says, “ATP’s staff was very knowledgeable. Not only did I learn about the variety of chairs available, they assessed the height of my monitor and keyboard, and also recommended a floor mat and footrest. Their attention to detail has really made a difference.”

Device Reutilization Activities

Reutilization is the transferring a used device from someone who no longer needs it to someone who does.

Device reutilization falls into 3 activity categories	FY	# of device	Cost savings for consumers
1. Exchange The want-ad type services are listed on at4all.com. Devices can be purchased or obtained at no cost from the current owner	2011	1	\$100
	2012	12	\$18,750
	2013	3	\$3,400
	Total	16	\$22,250
2. Reassignment Gently used devices are sanitized and permanently reassigned at no cost to individuals.	2011	202	\$49,866
	2012	334	\$91,812
	2013	221	\$98,648
	Total	757	\$240,326
3. Open-ended loans Devices borrowed for a long-term basis, keeping it as long as needed	2011	21	\$12,413
	2012	30	\$20,869
	2013	32	\$20,232
	Total	83	\$53,514
3 Year Total		856	\$316,090

Expanding ReUse

In April of 2013, ATP hosted a ReUse Summit. Participants joined ATP in gaining a national perspective on AT reuse, collaboration with others, and successful strategies from Carolyn Phillips of the Pass It On Center in Atlanta, Georgia.

A ReUse Network was an outcome of the Summit. The Network's goals are to increase awareness of reuse, promote benefits and availability, and reconnect people to equipment. Two workgroups (Marketing and Refurbishment) are meeting on a regular basis focusing on the identification and recruitment of reuse programs in the state, developing best practices, and exploring ways to expand reuse across the state. A second summit is anticipated for the spring of 2015.

Chris's Success with Technology

"I was able to find a chair that is a good fit for me on at4all.com. The chair I had is being used by someone else. Reuse is so important."

Chris, Kearney



Community Living

Nebraska's partnership with Nebraska Health and Human Services and other organizations make it possible for individuals with disabilities to have more control over their lives and continue to live in their home rather than in a more restricted environment thanks to home modifications and assistive devices.

Securing funding can be a barrier to obtaining modifications and equipment. It may take funding from several sources to secure adequate funding for an entrance modification that can cost more than \$5,000. Individuals are not familiar with existing programs and their services. Completing multiple applications can be time consuming and can also be a challenge to coordinate several supports to create a funding package.

An ATP Resource Coordinator received more than 470 multi-agency funding request forms from consumers in 2013. The form developed in 1992, is used to initiate referrals to 13 cooperating agencies and 20 out-of-state programs (grants from disability groups, vendors, etc.) Fifty-three percent of the requests were for entrance and bathroom modifications.

Nebraska programs funded the following home modifications (entrances and bathrooms), vehicle modifications, and equipment for independent living, i.e. grab bars, lifts, reachers, etc.

As a result, consumers function with greater independence and safety in their home. Modifications also make it possible to return home from the hospital or a nursing home and it also can prevent a move to an institutional setting.

521 projects authorized

Primary source of funding	\$ 1,596,318	Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, Home and Community-Based Waiver Service for Aged Persons or Adults or Children with Disabilities
Additional amount leveraged	\$ 284,146	Co-funding for projects (needed when cost of project exceeds program caps)

Total Authorized \$1,880,464

Average cost of project \$ 3,541

50% of the projects (259) were authorized for the adult population age 19-64

Comments from consumer surveys after their project is completed:

- I can now go up and down my stairs safely
- The new shower and wider bathroom door make it possible for my husband to use his walker to prevent falls
- I am able to enter and exit my home independently while attending college

For individuals who are not eligible for funding (or funding may no longer be available) and cannot afford to purchase what they need, reuse of equipment is a solution. Consumers may be able to locate a platform porch lift or aluminum ramp at no cost listed on at4all.

Darrel's Success with Home Modifications

Darrel is 38 years old and lives in Alliance. He has experienced Multiple Sclerosis (MS) since 2010. He is still able to stand and walk short distances. The MS is beginning to affect his balance and strength on his right side.

The ATP Technology Specialist was challenged to make Darrel's entrance to his home accessible and safe now and in the future. Darrel plans to use a wheelchair instead of a walker as his disease progresses.

Existing entrance



Darrel's home had three entrances. The Technology Specialist selected the patio entrance with a sliding door as the best option.



Modifications included replacing the sliding door with a 72" patio door frame. A 36" wide door with a threshold ramp will accommodate a wheelchair. The newly constructed ramp includes handrails, a feature for now and in the future.

Ramp and railings

The project was funded by the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services Home and Community-Based Waiver Service for Aged Persons or Adults or Children with Disabilities.



Locating accessible rental units is easy thanks to housing.ne.gov. In 2013, rental inventory increased 10% (28,000 units listed). Over 70,000 visitors resulted in 90,000 searches and 400,000 page views. More than 3,000 searches included accessibility features (first floor units, roll-in showers, and automatic door openers, etc.)

The on-line resource was promoted at numerous events, including the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Fall Conference and the Nebraska Assisted Living Association Senior Supports Conference. Rack cards are distributed to agencies on an on-going basis and ATP distributes them at all their events.



Service Providers shared:

"I've used the housing site in Job Club. I especially like the statewide resource page where clients can explore how much rent they can afford along with a rental checklist page."

"I have found it helpful for older adults on limited incomes."

E d u c a t i o n

ATP collaborates with the Nebraska Department of Education, Educational Service Units, schools, and Nebraska VR to help students be successful in the classroom.



The 2013 Nebraska Deaf-Blind Summer Institute's theme was "Literacy Blast: Including Sensory Processing". The training is a unique learning opportunity where information is applicable to educators who work with children and youth experiencing deaf-blindness and other disabilities.

An ATP Technology Specialist conducted a hands-on session for 38 teachers. A make 'n take item for teachers to use in their classrooms was a fidget (made with beads on a string). It can be manipulated by students with attention issues when they are frustrated.

ATP Education Technology Specialists based in ESU's across the state provide the following services to help students be successful in the classroom:

Professional Development and Training

Large and small groups benefit from events designed to increase knowledge and skills of parents, educators, and professionals.

Consultations

Technology Specialists respond to requests and help identify student specific appropriate assistive technology solutions.

Equipment Demonstrations

A demonstration is a sampling that compares the features and benefits of a particular device or category for a student or small group.

Equipment Loans

Equipment loans are another way to sample equipment to help in the decision making process. A loan can also fill a gap while waiting for funding or repair, and can be an accommodation. The cost savings to the schools is the purchase price of the device.

Awareness Events

Presentations and exhibits at conferences are designed to reach a large audience.

ATP Education Services	2012-2013	2013-2014	Total
Professional Development and Training			
Events	179	286	465
Number attended	1,473	7,000	8,473
Consultations	514	601	1,115
Equipment Demonstrations	236	282	518
Equipment Loans	635	686	1,321
Awareness Events	277	362	639

7th Annual Youth Transition Conferences attended by 1,183 students, parents, and educators

During the one day workshops held at Scottsbluff, Kearney, Norfolk, Omaha, and Lincoln, students, parents, and educators explored post high school education and employment. Sessions included Getting and Keeping My First Job, Careers in Wind and Solar, My First Apartment, Assistive Technology for Transition, and Working with my Service Coordinator. Planning has started for next year with input from the evaluations received this year.

Technical Assistance provided to 90 schools

To ensure access for public schools, ATP provides technical assistance to the Nebraska Department of Education Special Education Office. A program coordinator meets with school administrators to identify modifications and reviews plans for compliance with building access under the American's with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Modifications result in accessibility for students, school personnel, and the general public.



A school district needed assistance in making their play area accessible for a kindergarten student who uses a wheelchair. The ATP Coordinator met with the SPED director, principal, teachers, therapists, and the building facility staff. After a tour of the grounds a list of improvements was identified, including an accessible route to the play equipment.

A walking track connects the playground and an accessible swing glider was repurposed from another school location.

Nebraska ChildFind responded to more than 300 calls from parents, physicians, and educators

Nebraska ChildFind housed at ATP operates a statewide toll free information and referral phone line. ChildFind provides information to parents, school personnel, and service providers on child development and special education for children from birth (or date of diagnosis) to age 21.

ChildFind also helps parents access information on rights and resources to help them advocate for an appropriate education for their child.

ChildFind and ATP join forces to promote their services across the state at a variety of events, including medical conferences for school nurses and physicians and training for educators (Kindergarten Conference, Nebraska Department of Education Administrator Days). A display at Husker Harvest Days is successful in reaching rural Nebraska residents.

Early Development staff answer questions at the ChildFind and ATP booth during Husker Harvest Days held in Grand Island each September.



Employment - Careers for a Lifetime

Since 1999, ATP has partnered with Nebraska VR to help clients be successful on the job using appropriate and cost effective worksite modifications.

Nebraska VR refers clients to ATP during any milestone of their career. The first benchmark may be for the transition student exploring the job market or pursuing a higher education. Other clients may be investigating job opportunities after completing a higher education or specialized training. Many clients need accommodations in order to remain at or return to their current positions after an illness or injury.

ATP Technology Specialists conduct assessments in a variety of settings such as classrooms, factories, offices, hospitals and self-employment environments.

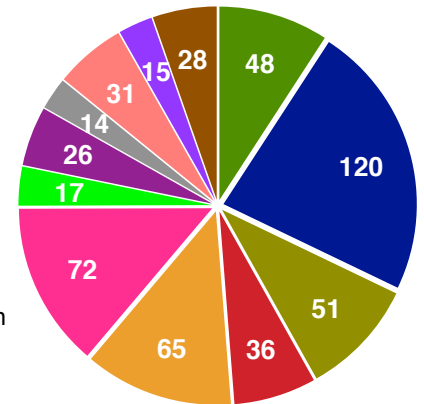
Consumer Service Requests 523 (a client may have multiple requests)

Amount Authorized

\$ 912,300 Title 1

\$ 110,605 Leveraged from other funds

\$1,022,905 Total



Service Request Types

- Aids to Daily Living/Durable Medical Equipment
- Home Modifications (bathrooms, entrances, etc.)
- Vehicle Modifications
- Mobility Device
- Communication
- Prosthesis/Orthosis
- Cognitive Aids, My Bionic Brain
- Computer
- Worksite AT
- Ergonomics
- Hearing/Vision
- Other

Chris's Success with Technology



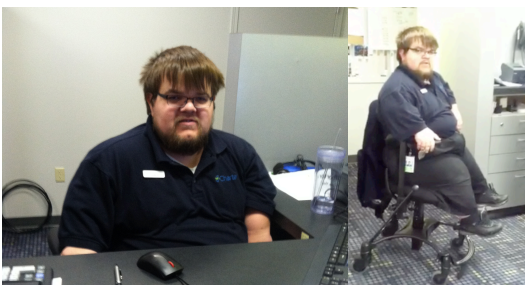
Before

difficult for him to access office supplies on his desk and he could not reach the cash drawer.

Chris works in Grand Island at a cable and internet business. He is a person of short stature and needed a solution to be successful at his customer service job. Employees use task chairs at the 41" high stations. Chris had been using an office chair with a stool under the desk to help push himself into the chair. He was not able to reach items from customers and it was

Chris was referred to ATP by Nebraska VR for an on-site assessment. After researching chairs, the Technology Specialist determined none of the standard chairs would meet the needs of the consumer.

After further research, a custom built chair was recommended. The powered chair would raise Chris up to the required counter height. Features also include adjustable arms and a brake extension. The chair also has the ability to rotate at the higher setting, making it possible for Chris to reach the phone and calculator. Chris is now able to work at other counters in the office along with the other employees.



After using customized chair

Employer Outreach is on the Rise (RYSE)

The Lincoln ATP office is creating a model (RYSE, Retain Your Skilled Employee).



During a visit to ATP's demonstration center, two employers assembled a holder out of PVC pipe. This solution is low cost and can be utilized to hold books and electronics.

One of the goals of the program is educate employers how technology can make it possible for employees to begin employment or to continue and/or return to work after an illness or injury. The second goal is familiarize them with the availability of demonstration and loan equipment and the contribution it can make to success on the job.

More than 16,000 devices are available for demonstration and loan across the state. More than 1,100 in are in the Lincoln office.

Since 2011, demonstrations have increased by 200%. Invitations to the demonstration center have been sent to organizations and contacts have been made with groups offering to make presentations at their annual conferences. A health care provider has scheduled routine visits for individuals who could benefit from assistive technology. Several visitors have been referred to Nebraska VR.

Resources are being compiled to share with employers and the next step will be to create an on-line package which connects employers to equipment and local resources across the state.

M o r e a c t i v i t i e s

Training

More than 3,000 individuals attended training (in addition to those conducted by the ATP education staff). Nearly 60% of the training activities were on AT products and services and 26% of the participants were individuals with disabilities.

Information & Assistance

ATP responded to more than 3,000 requests for information from consumers, their families, and professionals. Information was provided on funding, housing, independent living, education, and employment, and equipment.

Public Awareness Activities

ATP reached 208,000 individuals across the state distributing print brochures and utilizing social media. In addition presentations and exhibits at job fairs, disability workshops, health care professional conferences, training for educators, and other events were successful in increasing awareness. Teaming up with Nebraska ChildFind, Nebraska VR, the Brain Injury Association, and others extends the impact and saves time and resources.

ATP and Nebraska VR staff share a booth at a job fair.



ATP Advisory Council

Nancy Coffman, Chair, Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired, Lincoln
Greg Anderson, Omaha
Pete Biaggio, Nebraska Department of Education, Special Populations, Lincoln
Opal Feeney, Maxwell
Jaime Galloway, Lincoln
Chis Gaspari, Kearney
Teri Holman, Nebraska Planning Council on Disabilities, Lincoln
David Newburn, Omaha
Joni Thomas, Independence Rising, Grand Island
Christopher Turner, Mid Plains Community College, North Platte
Judy Volland, Nebraska VR, Grand Island
Steve Walline, Lincoln
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Mark Mason, Nebraska VR, Lincoln
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